



GUIDE TO BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

POWERED BY:



CONTENT:



ACCOUNTABILITY



**WHO SHOULD I BE
ACCOUNTABLE TO**



ONBOARDING



**ACCOUNTABILITY
IN ACTION**

Dear MRAA Member,

We've all worked with, or worked for, or supervised that employee who seems to get by without even completing the minimum required of them. Those employees skate by because they're friends with too many people at the dealership, or they're too kind and social, or they're great at one aspect of their job, even though they're failing at the rest of their tasks.

It's frustrating. As a supervisor, you're put in a difficult situation because you don't know how to make them be accountable, and you don't know what to do if they're not accountable. As a co-worker, it's aggravating because you're completing all that's asked of you, and beyond, and others are doing half the work for the same reward.

And that's where the problem lies. Even one unaccountable person at your dealership can drag down the dealership's performance and morale. Imagine if you have several unaccountable employees — maybe you don't even have to imagine that.

We've heard time and again that dealers are looking for guidance when it comes to accountability. Many of you have realized the negative effects that a lack of accountability causes, and you're ready to hold your employees accountable, but you don't know where to start.

This guide, brought to you by the Marine Industry Certified Dealer program, is meant to be your starting point. Piggybacking off the third quarter Continuous Certification course, "How to Create a High Accountability Dealership" with John Spence, it's a toolkit that can be used to build the foundation for an accountable dealership. In this guide, you'll find everything from details about job descriptions to information about onboarding to a dealer case study, all of which will help you hold your employees more accountable to the dealership, their department and their position. Using this guide, you should soon be able to create a dealership that's more profitable and that's a positive workplace for your loyal and accountable staff.

Sincerely,



Liz Keener
Education Specialist
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas



While as a dealer principal or a manager you may dream of a day when your dealership or department can operate on cruise control, this dream will never become a reality.

Perhaps a better dream — one with a higher chance of coming true — would be of a department or dealership where you, as an owner or manager, can confidently hold your employees accountable for meeting your expectations.

That may not sound like the stuff of dreams to you, but in most dealerships, there are gaps in the foundations of accountability that, if properly filled, would not only ease the burden of leadership on owners and managers, but also increase dealership performance and employee satisfaction.

According to leadership expert John Spence, lack of accountability and disciplined execution are the biggest roadblocks to building and sustaining a highly successful organization.

What's required to clear those roadblocks and build an accountable culture — or what Spence calls a "winning culture" — is rather simple, though it may not be easy. We've turned to industry experts to assemble this accountability guide that will help you build a foundation for accountability in your dealership.

First, we'll explore what an accountable culture looks like, then we'll walk you through the elements of the accountability guide to help you and your team collaboratively build a more accountable and profitable dealership culture.

WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?

Spence says that accountability is integrity — doing what you say you are going to do, taking responsibility and delivering the business the results you promised.

The problem is that in many dealerships, expectations are ill-defined, and employees are unsure of how their performance contributes to the success of the dealership as a whole.

To have accountability you have to have clear expectations, says Marine Industry Certified Dealership (MICD) consultant Jim Million. "People have to know what is expected of them, understand it and be willing to do it."

Million underscores the fact that the commitment has to come from both management and the employee.

"If there isn't accountability, change doesn't stick," Million said. "Accountability is the glue that holds culture change together."

WHAT DOES AN ACCOUNTABLE CULTURE LOOK LIKE?

An accountable culture starts at the top — you can't expect your team to be accountable to the business if you are not accountable to the team.

Lead MICD consultant Bob McCann says it all comes down to good communication. The entire team needs to know what the goals of the dealership are and how each department can contribute to success. Most importantly, McCann says, you need to follow up to let the team know how the dealership has performed against those goals — celebrate wins as a team and be open about failures and changes of course so the team can learn and grow along with the business.

This level of accountability on the part of management will foster an ownership mentality among your team members.

In addition to ownership and accountable behavior, the benefits of what Spence calls a "winning culture" also include employee engagement.

A WINNING CULTURE LEAVES EMPLOYEES FEELING THAT:

- The dealership is a fun place to work;
- I work in a family atmosphere where people genuinely care about me;
- I get to work with people I consider my friends;
- I am given the training, support and resources I need to be successful;
- I am given freedom from micromanagement;
- I think things are fair and problems are handled well;
- I know I will be heard;
- I take great pride in the place where I work and want to be affiliated with the brand;
- I get genuine, honest and specific praise every 7 to 10 days.

Sounds great, right? But how do you get to a place where the majority of your team members feel like the dealership is a winning environment for them?



WHO SHOULD I BE ACCOUNTABLE TO?

Everyone needs to be accountable to someone — even managers and owners. If you're at the top of your dealership's organizational chart, you need to find peers outside your organization to be accountable to, says MICD consultant Jim Million.

He recommends creating an accountability group with dealers outside your competitive area. The group could be as small as two dealers, but having a peer to keep you accountable is key. He suggests talking with your group on a monthly basis to share your plans and goals and following up with one another to see how those plans are unfolding and if your goals are being met.

Many dealers satisfy this need by participating in one of the industry's 20 Groups. However, a more informal approach has proven effective for others.

"Iron sharpens iron," Million noted, and having a monthly appointment to check in with another business owner will help you keep your eye on what's important in your business.

Million paraphrases Charles E. Hummel's "The Tyranny of the Urgent," warning that as a business owner or manager, you can get so busy in business taking care of the urgent that you don't have time to do the important. You put out fire after fire, and take care of crisis after crisis, and you forget to take care of the important things, Million explains.

HOW TO SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

It is nearly impossible for employees to be accountable if they don't know what's expected of them.

McCann says that as an owner or manager, you need to start by working on verbal communication. "Get out from behind your desk — just get involved and find out what is going on," McCann said. "Talk with your people and have open conversations."

McCann recommends that you start to build accountability by recognizing what's going right. "Catch people doing well every day and organize team meetings that start with recognition and compliments," McCann said.

Praise is easy, but Spence notes that a desire not to look like a bad guy is a major roadblock to accountability. He reminds dealers that they have a responsibility to hold their employees accountable when things aren't going well, "Not holding employees accountable actually hurts employees, because it jeopardizes their jobs," Spence said in the third-quarter Continuous Certification course.

To manage those difficult conversations and avoid the potential of negative employee outcomes, lean on all of these tools for accountability:



-  **Job descriptions**
- WELCOME** **Onboarding process**
-  **Employee handbook**
-  **Process maps**
-  **Performance reviews**
-  **Individualized training plans**

POSITION TITLE: Bookkeeper	REPORTS TO: [INSERT TITLE]
To maintain and develop accurate corporate accounting practices and procedures for maximum profitability and cost-efficiencies within his/her department while supervising all accounting functions and staff.	
JOB DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:	

- Supervises all accounting functions including payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable and sales/purchases of vehicles and related documents
- Conducts an analytical review of monthly financial statements highlighting: deviations from budget, unusual increases/decreases in revenue and expenses, providing explanations for each
- Compares product lines by line and format, actual against budget on a monthly and year-to-date basis for gross margin deviations
- Monitors vehicles and parts inventories for increased cost efficiencies and profitability
- Designs and manages accounting policies and procedures for all departments
- Recommends capital expenditures for improved efficiencies
- Monitors financial institutions to obtain the most advantageous rates of return and makes suggestions to GM
- Knows, understands and applies municipal, state and federal legislation as it pertains to the dealership including tax laws
- Maintains accurate daily and monthly accounting, as directed, including but not limited to: monthly general

THE ROLE OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Your first impressions with your potential team members are made in your job descriptions. Not only is this your opportunity to sell prospective employees on the benefits of working at your dealership, but a well-crafted job description also clearly describes your company culture and begins to outline your expectations, building the foundations for accountability.

Job descriptions should include:

- 1. An introduction:** Share your dealership mission and values. Why should someone want to join your team, and what does your dealership culture look like?
- 2. Job title:** Be as clear as possible when creating your job titles; don't get overly creative as you want your title to meet what prospective employees would be searching for online.
- 3. Reporting structure:** Who will this person report to, and will they have any direct reports?
- 4. Key responsibilities:** What will this person be responsible for on a daily basis? Be as clear as possible, and use percentages of time when appropriate.
- 5. Skills required:** Create a list of the skills a person must have in order to complete the responsibilities listed above.
- 6. Qualifications:** Does this role require a college degree, training certifications, etc.? How many years of on-the-job experience will this role require?
- 7. Employment status:** Is this a full-time or part-time position?
- 8. Salary/benefits:** In addition to your pay scale, insurance



offerings and other traditional benefits, don't forget to include training, tuition reimbursement, tool allowances and other softer benefits when describing your overall compensation package.

9. Travel: Will the position require any travel for trade shows, dealer meetings, training, etc.? Set expectations for the percentage that an employee might be expected to travel.

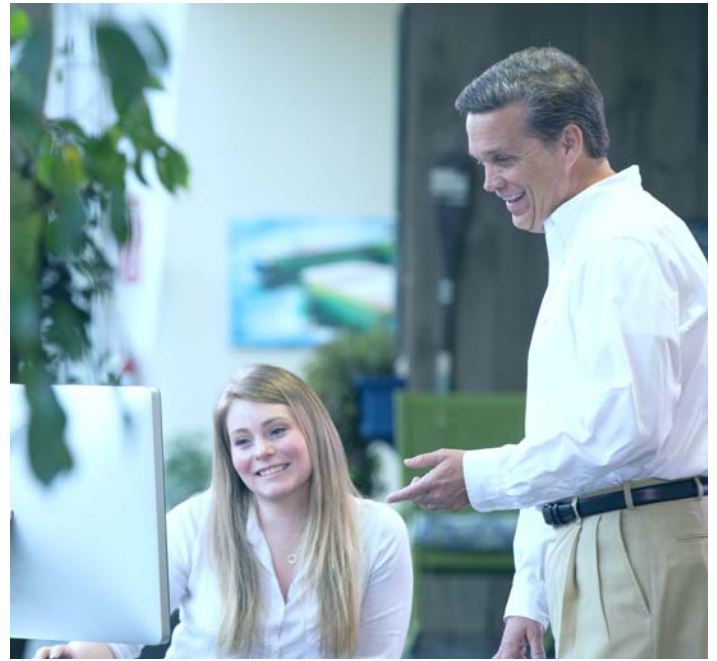
While many hiring managers focus primarily on experience and qualifications, it is critical for managers to determine if prospective team members fit into the company culture and are open to working in an accountable culture.

The role of a job description goes beyond the recruiting process.

“A JOB DESCRIPTION THAT’S A STATIC DOCUMENT ISN’T VERY ENGAGING,” MCCANN SAID. “AS A RESULT, YOUR TEAM MEMBERS DON’T HAVE A LOT OF OWNERSHIP OF THAT DOCUMENT.”

McCann advises managers to sit down with each employee at least annually, so they can review the job description together to ensure that the job description accurately describes the employee's current role in the dealership. “Ask if the description covers everything you should be doing and make sure to ask if there is anything that we didn't capture,” McCann explained.

If you don't have job descriptions in place, Million recommends that you work with your team members to build job descriptions. He emphasizes that it is participation and buy-in in the ongoing development of tools like job descriptions that make them effective for building a foundation for accountability.



BUILD AN ENGAGING ONBOARDING PROCESS

If your onboarding process includes a binder full of standard operating procedures to learn, videos to watch and paperwork to fill out, you may want to rethink your approach. Onboarding should be a process of discovery and sharing for both managers and new employees that reinforces your accountable culture.

“The onboarding process sets the tone for the relationship your new team member will have with the dealership,” Million said. “Think of this process as an initiation to your dealership.”

That initiation starts with socialization. If possible, introduce them to everyone in the dealership personally. If that isn't feasible, be sure to make a group introduction in your next all-team meeting. First days can be awkward. Help break the ice with a team lunch, and finally, help the new employee feel at home with your customers by welcoming them to the dealership family in your next email newsletter.

MRAA RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:



SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS:
MRAA PROVIDES MEMBERS WITH NEARLY 50 DEALERSHIP-SPECIFIC JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO VIEW AND USE AS AN EXAMPLE.



Bookkeeper
Sample Job Description

DRIVE ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITH A REVAMPED EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

It is easy for an employee handbook to become a legalese-laced book of policies. While it is important to include all of the relevant details related to vacation time, insurance, working hours, etc. in your handbook, be careful not to make your handbook so boring that no one actually wants to read it!

Take the time in the first week of orientation to walk a new employee through all of the content in the handbook. Ask questions to ensure the employee understands your company's mission, values and policies. See the process of walking a team member through the handbook as an opportunity to build engagement, not an obligation to check a box on the HR intake sheet.

Your handbook is an opportunity to share your dealership values and expectations, allowing you to paint the dealership in a positive light and build excitement. Use plain language in the same style of voice you use to communicate to your customers — this document should be an embodiment of who you are as a dealership.

Your employee handbook should be a living, breathing document that gets updated at least annually. When you release your handbook updates, share them with the whole dealership in an all-company meeting. A team-building refresher on your values and expectation is good for all employees — whether they've been on the team for a week or for a year.

Many traditional employee handbooks neglect to cover some key areas that are foundational to building an accountable culture. Spence asked dealers enrolled in the 2018 MICD Continuous Certification course on accountability to consider some of these fundamental questions. Answer them for your dealership and include them in your handbook.



QUESTIONS TO ANSWER WHEN CREATING YOUR DEALERSHIP'S HANDBOOK

WHAT IS YOUR DEALERSHIP'S "WHY" STATEMENT?

Not quite sure what a "Why" statement is? Take a detour over to YouTube and watch Simon Sinek's TED Talk, which is sure to shift your perspective on what your business has to offer your customers and your employees.

WHAT IS YOUR BELIEF FOR HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS? HOW DO YOU HANDLE:

- Customers?
- Employees?
- Quality?
- Competition?
- Speed?

WHAT DOESN'T MATCH THE CULTURE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

- Arriving late?
- Employees on their phones?
- No customer focus?
- What else?

WHAT ARE THINGS YOU REFUSE TO TOLERATE?

- Lying?
- Cheating?
- Stealing?
- Being rude?
- Being inconsiderate to fellow employees?
- What else?

MRAA RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:



MICD CONTINUOUS CERTIFICATION COURSE:
"HOW TO CREATE A HIGH ACCOUNTABILITY DEALERSHIP"
WITH JOHN SPENCE



PROCESS MAPPING FOR SUCCESS

“Just having a process map is about as valuable as eating a rock,” Million quipped. He advises that a process only truly becomes valuable when it is:

1. Documented in writing;
2. Mapped out visually;
3. Trained;
4. Understood and agreed to;
5. Being coached, and
6. Team members are being held accountable to the process.

As an owner or manager, it is simple to determine if your current process maps are effective. Pull your process map out of the drawer, study it and then ask your team members to walk you through the process. If they can't tell you what the process is, they don't know it, says Million. And if they don't know it, they certainly aren't doing it.

If you don't have documented process maps in place or if your maps are simply collecting dust in your desk drawers, Million recommends that you use this as an opportunity to collaboratively map out your processes as a team.

When as a manager you create a process and simply hand it out, you don't have buy-in, advises Million. Instead go to the team and say, “I want you to help me create the processes.”

If they take part in building process maps and agree to adhere to the processes, it is impossible for team members to argue that they didn't have a say later when they aren't following the agreed upon processes.

Just like all of the documentation in your accountability toolkit, a process map is only as good as the communication and conversation that it sparks among your team. Agreement on expectations is critical to adherence — have team members sign off on their personal copies of the process maps that apply to their role in the dealership and regularly review process maps to ensure compliance and to get team members' feedback for process improvement.

While the prospect of building process maps may seem daunting, it is important to remember that an easy-to-understand map can help avoid months of mistakes, missteps and lost revenue opportunities.



4 WEEKS TO A CAREER BASED ON ACCOUNTABILITY

An effective onboarding process should take several weeks, not several hours, according to Sam Dantzler of Garage Composites and Sam's Watersports Dock. He says that a common first mistake employers make is not explaining to new employees how their training is going to take place — this creates an immediate void of accountability on the part of the business in the eyes of the employee.

A good training plan starts with the employer mapping out what the onboarding process will look like for the employee, says Dantzler, and explaining what he or she is going to be doing and when.

Dantzler outlines his four-week onboarding process in the MRAA's Guide to Dealership Improvement. Visit Page 3 of that guide for an in-depth explanation of that process.

THE GUIDE TO DEALERSHIP IMPROVEMENT

*Inside: The tools, strategies and resources
to create a culture of continuous improvement*

THE PERENNIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

All of our experts agreed that feedback on your employees' performance cannot be limited to an annual review period.

In the dealership, you have to constantly let your people know how they are doing, McCann advises. It has to be part of the culture to let them know that they are winning on a day-to-day basis.

In addition to catching people in the act of doing a great job, Million recommends that you meet with all of your direct reports one-on-one on a weekly basis. These meetings act as mini performance reviews and allow you to agree on goals and action plans, and regularly discuss how the employee is performing.

McCann reminds owners and managers that these conversations need to be two-way and should not only focus on key performance indicators, but should also concentrate on the employee's motivations. In addition to showing your team member that you genuinely care, open conversations about the future allow you to plan for future hiring and keep you from getting caught off guard when your associate accepts a management position at the dealership across town.

Another major benefit of an ongoing conversation about performance and accountability is that it will allow you to intervene before performance gets too far off course. If you don't do this, the annual review will be really uncomfortable, warns McCann.

Not quite sure how to conduct a performance review or weekly one-on-one meeting? Follow these eight tips to get started:

1. Use performance reviews as an opportunity to develop your employees' skills and experience. You can't expect

your department or dealership to improve and grow unless your employees are improving and growing.

2. If you are conducting performance reviews for the first time, an easy way to start is to take the employee's job description and break it into three categories based on the impact each listed item has on the employee's success in the position: high, medium or low impact.

3. Once you have the employee's job description in hand — broken into high, medium and low impact responsibilities — rate the employee in each area on a scale of 1 to 3, in which 3 = Exceeds expectations, 2 = Meets expectations and 1 = Needs improvement.

4. Provide a blank copy of this performance evaluation to the employee in advance of the performance review meeting, so they have the opportunity to complete a self-evaluation.

5. During the meeting, review both versions of the evaluation, highlighting strengths, areas of improvement and opportunities for further development.

6. The opportunities for further development can be used to create a training and education plan for the employee, complete with deadlines and expected outcomes.

7. Use the high, medium and low impact categories to help you and your employee prioritize these development opportunities.

8. Lastly, the spirit in which you approach this conversation will go a long way toward building accountability for job performance. Employees must trust that you genuinely want to help them improve their performance. They need to believe that you have confidence in their ability to perform at a higher level and will provide the support necessary for them to achieve that growth.

MRAA RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:



MRAA TRAINING WEBINAR:
"HOW TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING"
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KPA ONLINE

"DEALERSHIPS THAT AUTOMATE ADMINISTRATIVE ON-BOARDING TASKS INCREASE EMPLOYEE RETENTION BY 16 PERCENT AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY BY 18 PERCENT!"

In most organizations, performance review time is compensation review time. McCann says that in employee surveys, team members often give feedback that they don't feel like they are fairly compensated. Managers should remind employees of not only their entire compensation package, but also intangible investments in their future, advised McCann. This includes the amount invested in insurance and 401(k) programs, as well as the time and money spent on training, tool allowances and trips to conferences and dealer meetings.

Finally, to encourage accountability, McCann suggests that every role in the dealership should include some level of variable compensation based on performance. "The paycheck is the ultimate motivator at the end of the day," McCann concluded.

INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In most dealerships, training is only offered to employees when a manufacturer or industry organization like the MRAA offers it, according to McCann. While these types of training sessions can be a key component of your dealership's training strategy, your team requires more specific and personalized training plans. This ensures team members have the skills and knowledge to be held accountable for the results that will help you hit your dealership goals.

McCann suggests that you start at a global level and get an understanding of where your whole team needs help. "See where you're not performing well and focus training in those areas," he advised. "Determine where the challenges are and go find training specific to that problem."

McCann reminds dealers that the MRAA – through MRAATraining.com, MRAA.com, the MRAA annual conference and the Toolbox e-newsletter – is a great

resource for training materials, but there are many other online sources that offer training related many of the challenges your teams may face.

Once you've addressed building a dealership-wide training program, it is critical to begin building training and performance development plans that are individualized for each employee.

If you've done your homework up to this point, you should have job descriptions in hand, a list of goals and KPIs for your employees, and you should be meeting on a regular basis to see how they're performing.

Armed with this knowledge, you can develop an individual training program to help your team members fill the gaps between your expectations and their performance.

Million reminds managers that the training and coaching style required for each employee may be different — you can't apply a one-size fits all approach to performance development.

Million suggests that managers employ a personality test such as the DISC test to help them get a better understanding of their team members' personalities and motivations, suggests Million. This will allow them to better personalize their coaching and performance development plans.

While there is no right or wrong personality type, you will inevitably encounter non-accountable employees. With this toolset in place, you'll be able to identify those poor culture fits quickly. McCann encourages you to take swift action when an employee just isn't on board with your dealership's mission. As the axiom goes, hire slow, fire fast!

MRAA RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK SAMPLE:
MRAA MEMBERS CAN DOWNLOAD A SAMPLE HANDBOOK
AND CUSTOMIZE IT FOR USE IN THEIR OWN DEALERSHIPS.





#DEALERSHIP GOALS

ACCOUNTABILITY IN ACTION: GORDY'S MARINE LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN

“Accountability is important because the team only succeeds if all team members are doing their job at a high level,” said Steele Whowell, co-owner of Gordy’s Marine on Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. “We recognize that when team members succeed or fail, we as leaders also succeed or fail. So if any member of the team falls short of their goals and expectations, then we as leaders also fall short, and we look internally to see what we could have done better to help that team member succeed.”

The team at Gordy’s – a Marine Industry Certified Dealer – relies on accountability throughout the operation, and Whowell said the management team places specific emphasis on the role of performance reviews. Each team member does a self-evaluation in addition to the evaluation conducted by the managers, Whowell explains. He notes that because there is good communication throughout the year, the self-evaluations and the evaluations conducted by the managers are usually in sync.

“Performance reviews not only bring out a conversation about what we are doing well and what areas we need to work on, but they also include goals that the team member created for themselves for the year,” Whowell explained. “In the one-on-one performance review, the team member and the manager discuss progress toward those goals.”

In addition to personal goals, every department has its own goals. During the dealership’s annual all-company team meetings, every team member and each department report back to the entire team on their goals, how they did accomplishing those goals, and then they present their goals for the next year. “We feel that this creates a high level of accountability on the individual to accomplish their goals to contribute to the overall success of the team,” Whowell said.

Whowell encourages other dealers to have all team members create meaningful, impactful and measurable goals for themselves, their department and the dealership as a whole. “Write those goals down, communicate them to the entire team, and then report back throughout the year and then at year end about how they did toward achieving those goals. Team members should own their goals and feel responsible to deliver those goals to the team,” Whowell concluded.



CONCLUSION

THE ROAD TO ACCOUNTABILITY IS PAVED WITH TRUST AND COMMUNICATION.

This guide has given you the tools and guidance you need to build a foundation for accountability. As Million reminds us, don't get so busy managing the urgent that you don't manage the important. What could be more important than holding your team members and ultimately yourself accountable for the success of your dealership?

NEED MORE HELP?

Dealers have reported over and over that they need assistance when it comes to developing a culture of accountability within their dealerships. Going through the Marine Industry Certified Dealership process goes a long way in helping dealers create such a culture.

Among some of the accountability-building requirements of the MICD program are the development or refinement of:

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROCESS

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

SALES AND SERVICE PROCESSES

SELLING PHILOSOPHY

The MICD program also requires dealerships to complete an annual employee satisfaction survey that allows you to assess how your employees perceive their work environment. Among its more than 30 questions, the survey asks about the employee's knowledge of dealership core values and principles, how the employee perceives the input of others at the dealership, if the employee would recommend the dealership as a place to work or shop, how the employee is treated by management and more.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



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